

Board of Selectmen Workshop
March 12, 2013

Five Selectpersons and the Town Administrator were present for this workshop on Vision and Strategy for the Town as well as Plans, Workshops and the Board of Selectmen calendar.

- Vision and Strategy for the Town:

This is a big picture discussion on what people love about Rockport. The business owners used to know the residents and could predict what they needed. There were gathering places where residents got together, spontaneously, and had a chance to meet. There are some eccentric residents that make it a colorful town. Residents tolerated long commutes to remain in Rockport, due to feeling safe living in a small town (not locking houses). The ability to walk around town, Dock Square. It's a touch of the old world. The small town familiarity with other residents. The town has heart, when someone needs something, everyone joins in. Access to the ocean, public foot paths and the woods/open spaces are an asset. Good school system and the Arts. No vocational aspects at the school any longer. Used to have dances in town. We have an active Teen Center. Fourth of July and Memorial Day celebrations are great. Tennis lessons, sailing lessons, used to have swimming lessons on the beaches. Used to have a hospital in town and local practicing doctors. Horse rides around town in the past. The Community House, Scout Hall are town assets. Cultural assets are - Shalin Liu, Little Arts Cinema, Spiran Hall. Choices of restaurants is impressive, a parking garage would be great, with an elevator, that fits into the neighborhood architecturally. How about valet parking? Small businesses, Cyrk, Twin Light Soda, cobblers, Cape Ann Tool Company, provided jobs in town in the past. Specialty shops attracted visitors to town. Art galleries; gift wrapping at some of the shops attracted people to town. Train service to Boston, festivals that are emerging, farmer's market coming to town. We lost a grocery store. Lobstering and fishing. Access to the islands. Senior services, state park, library, local book stores, beautiful gardens around town. People take pride in their properties. Water bowls are out at the shops for local dogs. Natural gas is an option for residents in town. Evacuation, if needed, would be difficult. The emergency plan is as good as we can develop. Golf course and yacht club are assets. A year-round down town would be beneficial. Availability of year-round jobs. The price of homes in Rockport makes it difficult for young families to move here. What do we have for high school aged kids? More grand hotels would be nice. Rockport Inn & Suites is an asset to serve businesses as well. Approachable police officers, integrated into the community. High quality public services delivered in a friendly manner. Used to nominate residents for exemplary actions or behaviors. Implementing a system to nominate residents is the issue. Lack of formality with elected officials. Coastal assets should be in great shape (sea walls, etc.). Fishing industry replenished. Town website enhancements.

- Workshops and the Board of Selectmen calendar:

Problems to address: Parking, MBTA station (1 workshop meeting) 3/26 or 4/9 for this workshop.

4/2 is the run-through meeting for Town Meeting

A meeting is scheduled for 4/16 (school vacation)

Snow plowing of private ways, and winter parking ban (1 workshop meeting)

4/23 meeting will be to review town meeting

Long Beach (1 workshop meeting)

Selectperson Fleming said all five members should be in attendance for workshops.

Chairperson Battistelli stated that the 20 parking spaces at the Post Office for Sundays would be great if they'd let people use them.

Periodically scheduled meetings: DPW, Committee Charges (2nd workshop – 5/21/13), on fees

Unfinished business appears on the Town Administrator's report. (boardwalks – letters will need to go out requesting those with boardwalks submit documentation to the board verifying the approval/validity of having them for review).

Selectperson Murphy moved to adjourn, Selectperson Sheedy seconded, Vote: 5-0.